

James P. Allen Building
379-381 Sibley Street
St. Paul
Ramsey County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-63

HABS
MINN,
62-SAIPA,
24-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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62-SAIPA,
24-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

JAMES P. ALLEN BUILDING

HABS No. MN-63

Location:

379-381 Sibley Street, St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota

Significance:

The Allen Building, more commonly referred to as the Aslesen Building is one of the most elaborate and unusual Victorian commercial buildings in the Lowertown area. The combination of ornate rounded vertical bands of brickwork between windows and the tasteful use of egg and dart molding in its storefront cornice is unique.

Description:

This five story, six bay, red pressed brick Victorian structure is one of the most ornate and sophisticated buildings in Lowertown. It features ornate rounded vertical bands of brickwork between the windows, rounded arched windows on the fifth story topped by triangulated brick, and a tall cast iron storefront with egg and dart molding in its cornice. The storefront has been partially obscured by signage and alterations. As with the adjacent Bishop Block, the cornice of this structure has been removed.

The park-facing facade of the Allen/Aslesen Building is of height, scale, style, and material that contributes to and is complementary with the historic character established in the Lowertown district prior to the turn of the century. Of particular importance is the relationship of this facade to the open space of Mears Park. This is an urban park and the sense of enclosure provided by the surrounding facades of historic character contributes to the experience of an urban open space of that era. The Allen/Aslesen facade, in conjunction with the Bishop Block/Sperry facade, is an important element in achieving that sense of urban enclosure. The enclosing facades around the park are also important because they provide a historic backdrop for present day activities within the park. The Allen/Aslesen Building is an integral part of the Lowertown character and a most important contributing factor in the facade/park relationship.

History:

The Allen/Aslesen Building was constructed by builder, George J. Grant at a cost of \$33,000 as a warehouse for the James P. Allen Wholesale Drug Company in 1888. Although the architect of the building is unknown, the attenuated clustered semi-circular brick bands are similar to those found on the St. Paul Building (originally the Germania Bank Building) which was designed by J. Walter Stevens with Harvey Ellis. By 1922, the James P. Allen Building was occupied by the Young Mercantile Company. The

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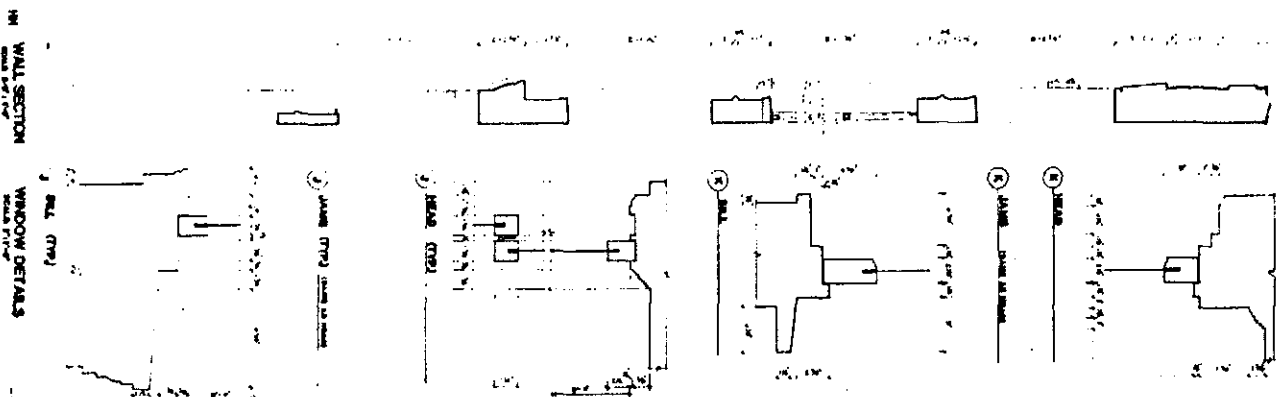
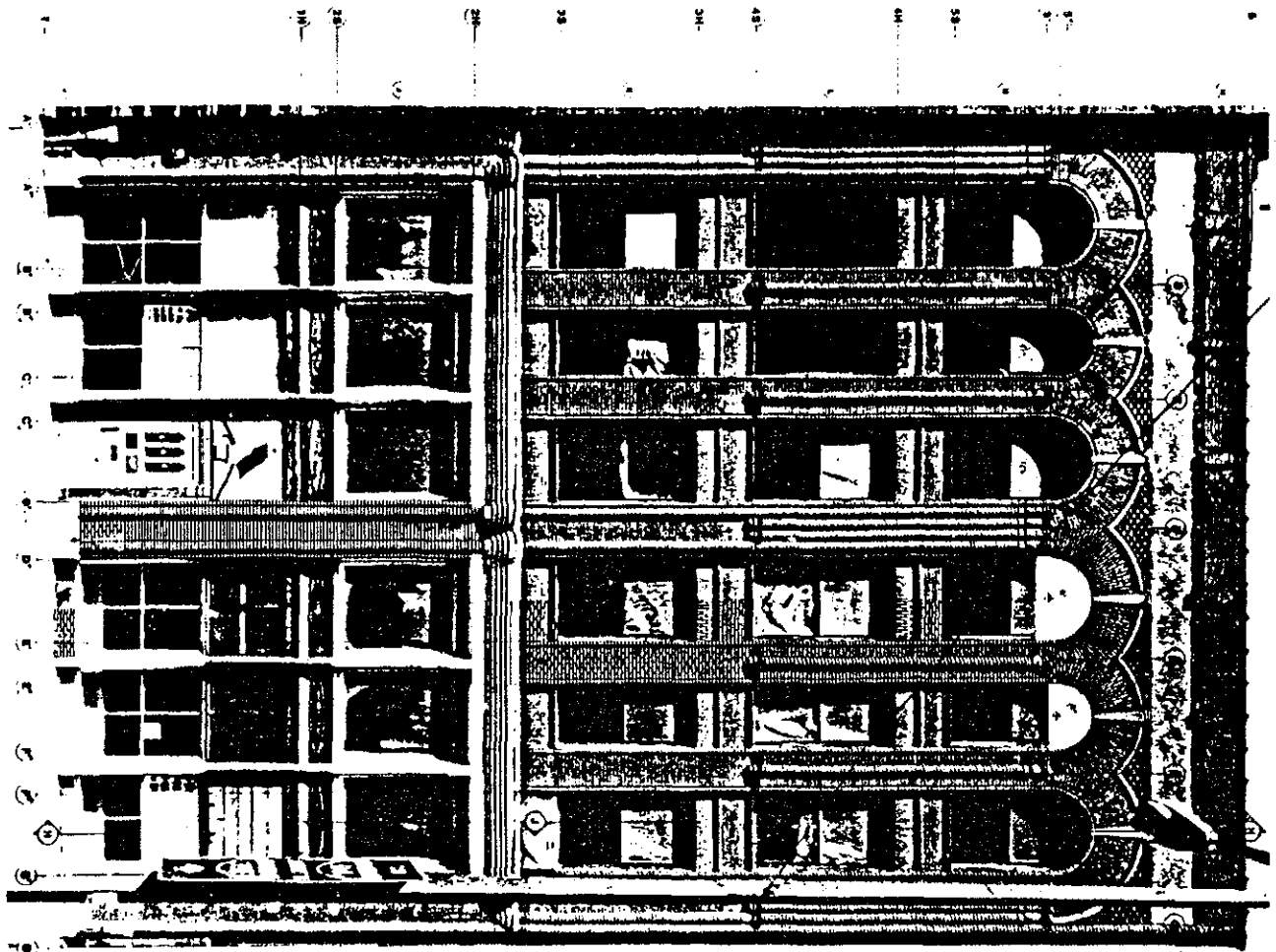
structure also housed the Joestling and Schilling Hotel Supply Company for a number of years. Recently, the Butwinick's Outlet Store has been located in the Allen/Aslesen Building.

Sources:

HPC/RCHS Tour Information, research by Jim Sazevich, 1980.
Lowertown Historic District, National Register Nomination Form,
prepared November, 1981.

Historian:

P. Murphy
3/27/81



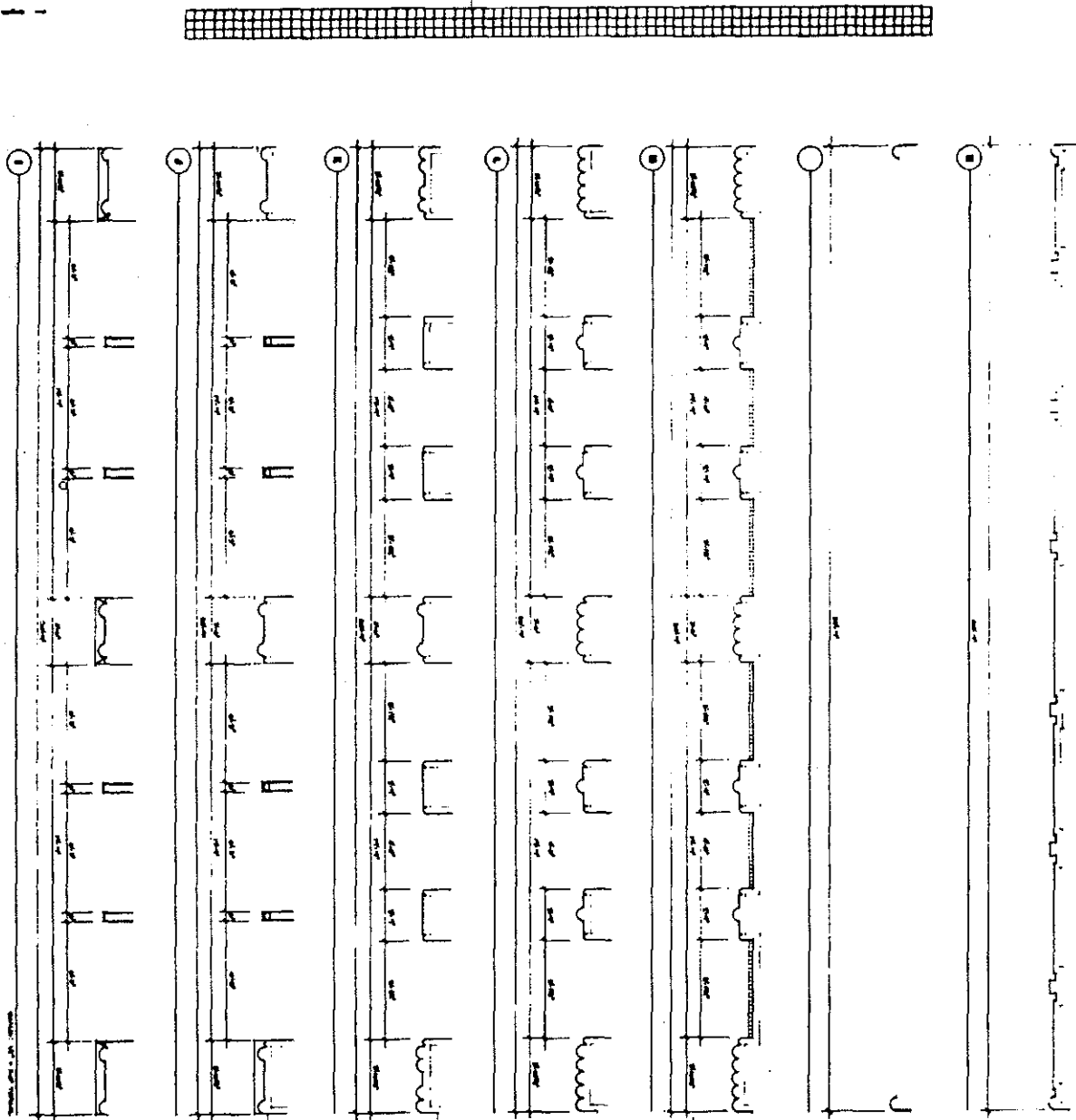
Photocopy of a photographic reproduction of a drawing of the east (front) facade

Block 40

Lowertown
St. Paul, Minnesota

MAILLER
HANSON
WESTERHOLM
BELT
ARCHITECTS INC.

ASLESEN BLDG.
ELEVATION
3/8" = 1'-0"



Photocopy of a photographic reproduction of a drawing of the east (front) facade

